




Speech By
Patrick Weir

MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE

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HEAVY VEHICLE NATIONAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (4.42 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Heavy Vehicle National Law Amendment Bill 2019. It has always been LNP policy to support measures that are intended to enhance administrative efficiency, reduce the regulatory burden on industry and improve the productivity of freight carried by road, thus the LNP will not be opposing this bill.

This bill will amend the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012 to implement nationally agreed reforms or necessary amendments, including to reduce the administrative and regulatory burden for the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator and the heavy vehicle industry through the inclusion of a number of minor and technical amendments and to make consequential amendments arising from the enactment of the Commonwealth Road Vehicle Standards Act 2018 which will repeal the Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989.

The heavy vehicle national law is the foundation of the Council of Australian Government's national heavy vehicle reform plan. As a single national law, it was designed to ensure that the heavy vehicle industry could operate across most of Australia without conflicting regulatory requirements. This is a practical law to streamline heavy vehicle movements across the length and breadth of our nation, transporting goods, produce, livestock and freight. Since the heavy vehicle national law passed in 2012 there has been a resultant multistaged process to reduce the level of complexity and increase its effectiveness. The remarkable advancements in technology have also been a contributing factor in the need for an ongoing review. The proposed legislative amendments contained in this bill are an important part of that process.

This legislative amendment plays a significant role in lifting the productivity of the road network and freight fleet. However, road safety always remains at the forefront of all policy decisions to protect the safety of the public and manage the damage to infrastructure that heavy vehicle movements can cause. The proposed amendments in the bill were endorsed by the Transport and Infrastructure Council in November 2018 and March 2019. The amendment which allows for an increase in volume where mass is not a constraint providing for specific semitrailers to operate at 4.6 metres without a notice or individual permit is a clear example of common sense. This amendment will improve productivity which is the key to reducing freight costs. This one change will deliver better outcomes for the industry and the wider community.

The electorate of Condamine has three major roadways running through it: the Warrego, the Gore, and the New England highways and now the newly opened Toowoomba Second Range Crossing links these roads. There is an enormous number of heavy vehicle movements each and every day on each of these roadways—trucks continually carrying commodities—freight, construction materials, water, fuel and stockfeeds to name a few—while sharing the road with families, school buses and tourists. The road conditions need to be continually maintained and renewed to ensure the safety of all road users. The Labor government has underfunded roads, with the 2017-18 Auditor-General's report *Integrated transport planning*, summary of audit findings stating that the Department of Transport and Main Roads calculated as of 30 June 2017 there was a \$4 billion renewal backlog for its road network.

Agriculture is almost 100 per cent reliant on the use of heavy vehicle transportation to move livestock, grain, cotton, poultry, pigs and machinery to the marketplace, farm gate or processing plant. The agriculture industry needs our roads to be maintained to a high standard to ensure their day-to-day activities can continue without disruption. The LNP understands and values the significant contribution the heavy vehicle transport industry makes to the economy and we will continue to introduce measures to improve productivity and safety for all those working in the industry. After all, they do keep this country running.

There has been mention of the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing. I was at the opening of that road. I have travelled it twice already. It is a wonderful asset for the district. As I said, the standard of our roads is very important to our freight industry. About 12 months ago we had a tragic accident on the Gore Highway which took the life of one of our local identities, Lyndon Pfeffer. There have been charges laid over that incident. Anything that we can do to keep our roads to a standard where we avoid these incidents has to be supported. This is good legislation and we will be supporting it.